

**Pre-K**  
**4<sup>th</sup> 9 Weeks Collaboration Time**  
**March 30, 2011**

**Writing:**

Learning to write parallels learning to talk. There is a developmental continuum with predictable stages. As a teacher, you are building an attitude toward writing—make it appropriate, fun and developmental. Students at a young age need to see themselves as a writer, and they need to understand what it means to be a writer.

- I learn when I imitate.
  - Students need to see adults interact with print and put thoughts on paper.
- I learn when I am surrounded.
  - Students need to see meaningful print in context and in a sentence. (Example: This easel holds paper.)
  - Students need to see environmental print.
- I learn when I play and invent.
  - Students need to explore lots of writing tools.
  - Students need to experiment with reading their own writing.
  - Students need to be encouraged to write sounds they hear. (Pre-K writing versus the book or dictionary way.)
- I gain confidence the more I play.
  - Students need a supporting environment.
  - Students need writing celebrations.
  - Students need to be comfortable with trial and error, making mistakes, and risking another try.

Reading and writing are reciprocal processes.

As you read aloud across the year, surround reading with talk about:

- The people who make the books
  - refer to authors and illustrators by name
  - show children pictures of authors and illustrators
  - read author blurbs and dedications
  - reread books over time
  - read multiple books by the same author so they get to know him/her
- What makes a picture book a picture book
  - a picture book has both words and illustrations in it
  - the words and illustrations change from page to page in a picture book while still on the same topic
  - a picture book is something, and the writer decides what this will be
  - picture books have crafted language in them
- Different kinds of books
  - some books tell stories
  - some books tell facts about something
- Different purposes for books
  - some books are for fun (entertaining)
  - some books teach you things (informative)
  - some books do both!

- The decisions writers and illustrators make in books
  - Things to notice in written text:
    - Print (bold, italics, different size, shape, color)
    - Interesting use of punctuation
    - Text layout (where the words are in relation to the pictures)
    - Repetition in words, phrases, sentences, beginnings or endings
    - People or animals talking (dialogue)
    - Sound
    - Beautiful language
  - Things to notice in illustrations:
    - Perspective-zoom in or zoom out
    - Interesting use of color
    - The presence of detail or white space in the background
    - Borders and other graphic features
    - How the words match the illustrations
    - How the illustrations extend the words
    - Illustration layout

Simple Writing Process for Emergent Writers:

1. Tell—oral language has a huge importance in linking thought processes with print
2. Draw
3. Write
4. Name and Date

Children are writers the moment they draw or put something down on paper and tell us what it says. We should call them writers and treat them as writers from that moment on. Picture writing is writing. Practice saying, "Write a picture." Or "What does your picture writing say?"

Scripting is an important step in learning to write. It helps students remember the story, helps others to read the story, and models for students how print works. Teach them, "If I write the words, they are still your words." Write exactly what they say. If it is something you want corrected, ask them "Would you mind if I rewrite 'playdid' for played?" or "Can I rearrange those words a bit?"

Prompts are okay, SOMETIMES. Give students the freedom/choice to write about the things they know and love. They will be better writers. They will learn to think about the moments or ideas they experience that are worthy to write about. They must believe that they have something to say, to tap into their personal experiences, expertise, and interests. If we constantly give them prompts, we are saying "you are not able to pick meaningful topics..."

Create class books of children's writing. Consider adding a parent page so the parents can respond and students can see their parents' writing. For example, create a class book on careers. Add an additional page for parents to comment, "When I was little I always wanted to grow up to be..."

Connect writing to fun. (*It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles G. Shaw) Become a writer by noticing the world. "Incidental" instruction is where children learn the most.

Pair/Peer teaching is important.

Never do for a student what they can do for themselves. Understand the difference between "nudging" and "pushing." Teachers must be an expert at noticing students' needs and planning to meet the needs in ways that support achievement in both READING AND WRITING.

### **Morning Message:**

Start early at the beginning of the year and build/scaffold the learning. At the beginning of the year, the teacher is doing most of the work. By January, students should have the structure down and can be more involved with the writing, and the teacher can share the pen. Expose the students to letter writing and paragraph writing with a title.

Possible Teaching Points for Morning Message:

- writing is speech written down
- left-to-right progression and top-to-bottom (directionality)
- one to one correspondence
- spaces between words
- return sweep
- letter recognition
- proper letter formation
- hearing and recording sounds in words (sound/symbol relationship)
- concepts of word and letter
- punctuation (end of the sentence: period, question mark)
- capitalization (names, days of the week)
- formats of different genres (friendly letters, paragraphs, expository writing)

Topics for Morning Messages:

- the students in our class and their families
- our teacher
- something that is happening at school
- something that is happening in \_\_\_\_\_ (name of village, town, city, etc. in which children live)
- a book we are reading or have read recently
- something that is being studied in Essential Units of Study
- something that is happening in the world

Below are some great websites to visit:

<http://www.jmeacham.com/balanced%20literacy/shared.writing/shared.writing.morning.message.htm>

[http://www.hubbardscupboard.org/morning\\_message.html](http://www.hubbardscupboard.org/morning_message.html)

<http://www.mrsnelsonclass.com/teacherresources/teachingwriting/morningmessage.aspx>

### **Resources:**

*Creating Young Writers Using the Six Traits to Enrich Writing Process in Primary classrooms* by Vicki Spandel  
(BUSH, CYP, DRCK, FAUB, GVH, NAUM, PARK, RRDG, RGN, STR, WEST)

*Engaging Young Writers Preschool to Grade 1* by Matt Glover (BAG, NAUM)

*Talking, Drawing, Writing: Lessons for Our Youngest Writers* by Martha Horn and Mary Ellen Giacobbe (BAG, GID, WHI)

*Already Ready Nurturing Writers in Preschool and Kindergarten* by Katie Wood Ray and Matt Glover (GID)

<http://teacherweb.com/KY/StsPeterPaulSchool/MsLorrie/hf4.aspx> (PreK teacher's website)

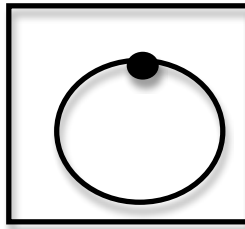
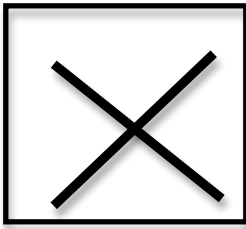
<http://teacherweb.com/KY/StsPeterPaulSchool/MsLorrie/newsflash8.aspx> (learning videos for PreK)

### Fine Motor Development:

The development of fine motor skills is crucial for writing. Handwriting is a fine motor skill. Writing is thinking, reflecting and creating. *Crossing the midline is everything.* Pre-K students need to cross the midline before they are able to put thoughts to paper. Every time a student crosses the midline they strengthen a certain part of their brain.

#### Suggestions:

After having students do their daily "sign-in," have 3 laminated poster boards at eye level for students to use dry erase markers to trace top to bottom, clockwise, and left to right. Have dry eraser available so that when they are done they can erase in the same top to bottom, clockwise, and left to right direction. Place two footprints on floor for students to plant their feet as they write.



#### Other things to try with your strugglers:

- use short pencils (like golf pencils) or broken crayons and have students write while lying on their belly
- have activities available that use tweezers, salad tongs, clothes pins, hole punches, sock puppets, etc. in centers

#### Pencil grip:

- use plastic practice golf balls with holes
- bulldog clips (finger rests in gutter when clipped to pencils)
- use an old sock with the foot cut off—elastic cuff covers hand and only 3 fingers are out (you can put a small cotton ball in hand with pinky and ringman inside cuff)

### Other Ideas:

Get more concentration with song.

Begin your lessons by "hooking" the children! Develop a repertoire of quick, fun, language-rich transition songs, chants, and raps that send a positive message: "Learning is fun, and we're ready to start!" Use this old classic to focus attention.

#### **Do-Wah-Diddy**

Here we are and we're ready to start,  
Singing do-wah-diddy-diddy-dum-diddy do;  
Eyes and ears are doing their part,  
Singing do wah diddy diddy dum diddy do;  
We look good! (We look good!)  
We look fine! (We look fine!)  
We look good! We look fine!  
All our brains are gonna shine! SH!